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THE

WIDOW'S JEWELS.

BY MRS. PICKARD.

REVISED BY DANIEL P. KIDDER.

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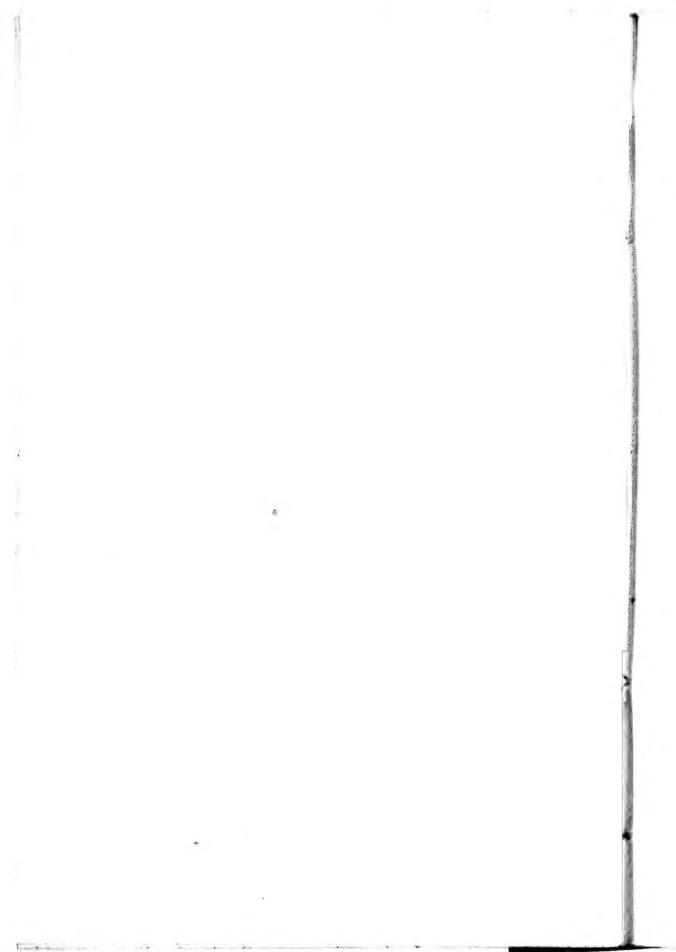
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INTRODUCTORY.

LITTLE READERS,—When a wealthy Roman lady was visiting a noble friend of hers, she opened before her the rich casket of jewels which she possessed. There lay soft, pure pearls, rosy rubies, and glowing diamonds, blending their light in brilliant harmony and profusion. Their owner looked proudly up to her friend, and asked what she could show to rival them. Without wishing or attempting similar display, she calmly waived the subject until her children were returned from school, and then drawing them toward her, with eyes beaming with love and gratitude, said, "*These are my jewels.*"

Jewels, you know, are beautiful and of great worth—becoming gifts to kings and princes, and chosen decorations of a crown. Even the King of kings receives them to ornament his glorious dwelling-place, and the Prince of life will take them, and wear them in his diadem—but not those sparkling formations gathered from the

rock, or sand, or river's bed, which we admire and prize so much. In the sight of God these are gems of greater price; and when all else shall be destroyed, he will reveal, numbered among his jewels, those children whose humble and affectionate hearts have obeyed him, and dutifully attended the parents he has given them.

To aid in strengthening upon your young minds impressions of this important duty, the writer has collected from memory, and placed in contrast, the incidents of the following pages, knowing that every lesson, however simple, which you treasure up and profit by, will be imparting another ray of beauty to "jewels" which are to shine for ever and ever in the paradise of God.

Prayerfully, your friend,

Saint John, N. B.

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THE
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CHAPTER I.

ROBERT M'COY.

"Good morning, my little lad," said Mrs. Selden, one day, to a rosy-cheeked boy, with curly hair and full hazel eyes.

"Good morning, ma'am," said he, with a smile, at the same time removing his well-worn cap, and the thick dark curls settled lightly about his temples, adorning them with beauty of which the little possessor was wholly unconscious.

"What is your name?" she asked.

"William M'Coy," he replied.

"How old are you, William?"

"Eight years old," said he, still smiling.

"Where do you live?" inquired Mrs. Selden, much interested by his manly voice and appearance.

"With my mother, just on the hill," answered he. "Surely you know the Irish woman who lives here in St. John? She attends meeting almost every sabbath at the Methodist chapel, and belongs to Mr. Welles' class. I and my brother belong to the sabbath-morning class."

"No, my dear; I have never heard of your mother. Is not your father living?"

"No, ma'am," said he, touching his bright lips, while a shade of seriousness passed across his noble brow; "no, ma'am, he died a long time ago in Ireland; one gloomy Saturday night it was."

"Do you remember him, William?"

"Yes, a little; and I remember the night he died—it rained so hard, and the wind blew dreadfully. It was all dark. I remember, too, that he kissed me, and his breath felt cold upon my cheek. Aunt Dinah did not come; all night we were there alone, and I cried, for mother did. I did not know much about it then, but now I often wish I had a father."

"Perhaps your father is happy in hea-

ven," said Mrs. Selden, consolingly, for she pitied the little one.

"Yes, he is, I know," added William. "Mother often says so; and when I wish I had a father, I think he *is* living there. But I mean I should like to see him sometimes, and hear him speak, and know that he does not forget us. Sister Jane and brother Robert can talk with mother all about him—how he looked and what he said; but I only mind a little of him now, and sister Nelly was not born till many weeks after he died."

Forgetting for a few moments the errand upon which William was sent to her, Mrs. Selden sat down, and drawing to her side a small rocking-chair for him, bade him be seated; and, while her arm rested along the top of it, continued their conversation: for the little stranger was every moment becoming more and more interesting to her, and she hoped she could do something for the relief of the family to which he belonged. His mother was poor, a widow, and they were fatherless; these were claims strong enough to a heart which

also trusted in Him, who, she remembered, in his holy habitation, has promised to be a husband to the widow, and the father of her lonely children.

"How long have you lived here?" asked Mrs. Selden.

"I do not know, ma'am," said he. "I think it is a long time; it may be as much as four years: because when father was dead, there was no one to bring us any more meal or fish, and mother could not get work enough to do, even to buy corn or potatoes for all of us, and then she came away here."

"And does she get work enough now, William?"

"No ma'am, not always," replied he; "this winter has been a hard one for us."

"How then does she support you now?" continued Mrs. Selden.

"Sometimes she does have some work to do, and sister Jane lives out to service, and brings her wages home each month; and that helps mother to pay the rent of our room: and sometimes this winter," added he, looking down, and turning round

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and round the little cap which he held in his hands, "sometimes—O, ma'am, what should we have done if the kind man had not given her something from the poor house!"

"I fear you must have suffered often from want of food and fuel, William."

"We have not suffered as much as poor old Mrs. Meloy has, who lives in the next room to us, and I do not think we shall. I cannot do much yet for mother, only while the men work in the ship yards, which will be a little while longer; they let me go in and pick up chips for us: but brother Robert is now thirteen years old, and once in awhile has some errands to do, for which he is paid money, and then he always brings every penny to mother. And this week he has begun to work on the roads: they will allow him to come three days in the week, and give him sixpence a day for breaking stones."

As he said this his countenance brightened again, exhibiting the hope of comfort which animated him even from this small new source. But, when all these little

gains were summed together, O how small indeed were they, and how insufficient to pay rent, and supply food, and fuel, and clothes, for four, during a long winter.

As Mrs. Selden looked upon him sadly, and almost wept at the picture of the hardships which her fancy drew as having been the lot of that lonely alien family, she remembered how often she had seen discontent and heard wicked murmurings among some little children who never knew want; but, while a kind father's care supplies all their needs, and a mother's gentle hand and voice is ready to soothe all their sorrows, even then they indulge in complaints and repinings, and words of sinful ingratitude not only have stained their lips, but have been heard by Him who notices where his blessings fall to bring back no return of praise, and in displeasure turns away his love from the sullen brow and thankless heart.

But William was not so. With cheerfulness he had counted up to Mrs. Selden their cherished dependences for future comfort. But was it these poor hopes alone

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which sealed that calm smile upon the face of little William, and gave to his voice that constant note of happiness? O no! not these. Beyond the scanty pleasures which he gathered here and there in his rough path of poverty, there was already in his young breast a deep and never-failing source of joy. It is true, the eye could not see its sparkling, and the ear of the bystander could not listen to its gentle flow, but all silently and sweetly it ever poured into his mind that calm content and holy hope which distinguished it as flowing only from that "Well of water" of which the Christian tastes, purifying the heart, and "springing up to everlasting life."

In his own home was its influence most deeply felt, and blessed to his mother's joy. His brother Robert, too, shared in like precious faith; and cheerful was the little room in which they dwelt, with the eye of God looking down, and already numbering among his own those whom the desolate widow, in distress and affliction, thankfully reckoned as her "jewels."

CHAPTER II.

THE TOWN OF ST. JOHN.

THE eye of the reader of this little sketch may never have rested upon the scenery of one of the most eastern cities of the continent, St. John, and its vicinity. Lacking, as it does, the long and tasteful culture bestowed upon the soil with which we are more familiar, it might be to us, perhaps, in aspect, less lovely and beloved than the fair metropolis and smiling towns of New-England; but the wildness and grandeur so strikingly marked upon the noble features of the landscape at once command the notice of the beholder, and make him feel, as he approaches it, that, in natural scenery at least, it is not ground unworthy the favor of subjects of the British throne. Here, where but sixty years ago the Indian and the deer ranged in the forests, and, in undisturbed solitude, overlooked the broad bay, now, like a prosperous queen of its waters, sits this rapidly increasing city, a

long line of rocky and majestic hills extending on either hand.

Here has been the scene of many an interesting and affecting incident for the pen of history or romance to record; but, leaving these, we shall turn to daily life, and from this place select a subject which, though it never attracted public notice, and is now humble in relation, may nevertheless not be unprofitable to the little public for whom it is penned.

St. John has been, for a time, the home of the writer; and near the spot where she lived is the lonely dwelling-place of poor Mrs. McCoy. We call it lonely, though it stood in the midst of that busy city, and though, in the house which they occupied, there were other families, like themselves, emigrants from the coast of Ireland; but it was lonely because it was the abode of the widow and fatherless, who, oppressed by affliction and poverty, felt indeed that they were "strangers to the world, unknown," and from their small upper room saw not, as the gay, the rich,

may see and feel, the exciting animation which fills the breast, where business rattles in its noisy course, and beauty, wealth and fashion, walk abroad in bright display. And yet in that upper room, where were very few of the articles which comfort might require, there was an influence shed down from above, which can sweetly supply the place of other comforts; and even where most scantily is furnished "the bread which perisheth," can break in richest profusion to the hungry poor "the bread of life."

There was the table which "He who rules on high" so liberally spreads; and morning and evening did this little family encircle that spiritual board, seeking spiritual food: sometimes the tongue of the mother guided their united petitions, and sometimes, in the childish tones and thoughts of little William or Robert, prayer arose to Him who "out of the mouths of babes and sucklings has perfected praise."

Thus week after week went by, and cold mid-winter, with its storms, was on the land. From time to time, as Mrs. Selden

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saw them, and learned their circumstances, she found them happy with each other, and with the many blessings which they numbered up; uncomplaining in wants, and rejoicing that, while they were also preserved from the extremes of hunger and cold, they could look upward in love to meet a heavenly Father's love, being saved in their poverty from suffering "as those who have no hope."

CHAPTER III.

A NOBLE BOY.

How kind how, merciful, is that arrangement of Providence which makes not happiness and usefulness dependent upon the possession of wealth, nor even withholds from the very young the capacity to contribute a share of influence to the stock of human enjoyment. Robert had commenced his day labors upon the highway; and, during the few weeks in which he had been so privileged, he had felt himself to

be a happier boy than ever before. His time was more constantly occupied, and he was conscious of newly awakened energy and dignity, from the important aid he was thus rendering to his mother.

A week was closing. Robert had been all day at the employment which gave him so much pleasure: for uninteresting in itself, as may be supposed, was the occupation of breaking large stones into small ones; and fatiguing as it became when, sitting hour after hour upon the rough pile where he labored, he saw it only slowly accumulating, as stroke by stroke with his hammer he gradually diminished the large mass before him; yet no thought of discouragement at the very small compensation to be received, nor any feeling of weariness, could induce him to give up his post. As if he were constantly learning the value of perseverance from the hard, unyielding nature, of the stones themselves, he labored away, and made the long hours appear like short ones, by often remembering the affectionate smile of his mother when he had placed in her hand

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the three silver sixpences of a week's wages, and in imagining what would be her delight and his own, when he should present to her, in a form which his filial affection suggested, an unexpected luxury, as the avails of his next payment; how it would cure her headache, cheer her spirits, and gain for him the oft-repeated, "God bless you, my good Robert!"

Could the little boys, whose cheeks would probably have been bedewed with tears, if they had been compelled to endure what they might call the hardship of sitting thus at labor, in cold and poverty, have seen young Robert*—his cheeks and ears tinted with ruddiest crimson from exposure to the wintery blasts—his eyes, without a trace of tears, brightened by the emotions of gratitude and affection, while his steady-going hammer kept time with the tune he whistled—they could, overlooking his well-patched jacket, almost have been induced for awhile to exchange their warm firesides for his warm heart; and, leaving the little pleasures which

* See frontispiece.

money can purchase, they would certainly have felt and acknowledged that they are all small indeed compared with the pure pleasure of doing good.

It was Saturday evening. The hour for him, with his fellow-laborers, to leave their tasks came with the shades of night, and Robert, carefully putting up his hammer, which constituted all his little stock in trade, turned from the scene of his toil with happiness. A sabbath-day of rest was before him on the morrow: and ere he should sleep, preparatory to entering upon it, he could bring to his beloved mother a new comfort. Lightly he turned his steps toward the paymaster, and, receiving the money due to him, grasped the rich treasure in his hand. The queen herself had never *such* a pleasure as he foretasted now—perhaps none to be preferred to it.

"Halloo, Bob M'Coy!" called a young rough voice to him from the opposite side of the street. So occupied was Robert's mind with the one thought which had possessed it, that this sudden interruption

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of it made him start, and, looking confusedly around, he distinguished, in the faint twilight, the stout little form and tattered coat of James Doherty.

"Where are you going so fast?" said James; "I thought the street itself was not long enough for you then!"

"Home, as quick as I can, to mother," answered Robert, continuing on his way.

"Not so fast, Bob," shouted James again, eagerly; "I am older than you, and may be can tell you a word worth knowing."

"No, no," said Robert; "I have a great deal to do to-night."

"O yes, and don't I know it? your catechism to be sure. Ah ha! That's for being such a foolish tory that you were to learn to read indeed! But you *must* wait a bit," said he, looking at Robert, who heeded him not. Then using all speed, he soon overtook the composed boy, and holding out his hand, containing a few coppers, said softly, slyly nodding his head, "Just down by the yard yonder

is a nice handy corner, where Patrick Mahoney and I have been turning coppers so neatly to-day: let your mother go, and come you with the change the man gave you; see who'll win, and good luck to you."

"James Doherty!" exclaimed Robert; and he was about to add, "you are a wicked boy;" but checking himself, remembering that this would only make James angry, and prevent his doing him any good, he said solemnly, "Who are you talking to! I let my good mother go, indeed! and I am her oldest son, and she is my best earthly friend! Let her go, James, and go with you to spend so wickedly the money I have received; not I!"

"Your mother's oldest son, to be sure you are," said James, "and wiser than many an older one, as myself, you think. But you yet can learn a little; and it is I can tell you it is far easier to throw a copper with a good lad than to sit beating at stones all day."

"Not easier for me," said Robert, dignifiedly. "And, James, do you know *who*

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sees you all the time, and knows your sin? You forget *that* when you call it easy: no! it is *hard* work to sin!"

"And who says it *is* sin, you sinner, just to pitch a copper at a stick, and see it turn the very way you said it would, and put it in your pocket then so sweetly? as if that were not your own, and stealing you were all the time. No, no! it is the same thing that's done by gentlemen: and when I am old enough I will learn how they turn the *cards*! Come, we are just by the place."

"James, I told you I should not go! I am in a hurry to go home; and if I had the whole day and sunshine before me I would not go with you. I tell you it *is* sin: were those coppers each a golden 'sovereign,' and were a thousand more there shining by them, I would not take one of them so! It is sin, and *no gentleman* can make the matter any better."

The wretched urchin turned around facing Robert, and, dancing along backward directly in his path, raised aloft his hand containing the coppers, and shaking

it until each rent in his dirty sleeve became visible, exclaimed, "Ha, ha! let every man laugh that wins."

"Ah, ah! let every boy mourn that sins," responded Robert.

And so their interview ended; for poor Doherty was one of those who "refuse instruction," and always hasten to escape from it, where escape is possible. His parents were both unhappily of the same description, who, having lived long in disregard of sin, seldom feared or thought upon its punishment, and were rapidly preparing to leave to their numerous family of sons and daughters the miserable inheritance of their own poverty, idleness, and sin; with the sure prospect of its final, just recompense—even endless death. Much as these circumstances of their comfortless and discordant home recommended the children to the sympathy of those who condemn sin—although untaught, as they were, beneath that profane roof—yet from time to time a voice reached their hearts as they turned to commit evil; for God has not left himself without witness, even

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norance and superstition, the holy word
of God was as a sealed book, yet this
moving principle within, ever gathered for
them choice instructions from the light and
truth, which, in our favored lands, are so
widely scattered from its pages.

Conscience taught, then, of the sin of
this species of gambling; and, silently re-
proved within his own bosom, as well as by
the words of Robert, James hastily sought
to flee both the words and thoughts of re-
monstrance so annoying to him, and, mur-
muring the angry curse he dared not
pronounce, darted down the lane leading
to the "nice handy corner" to which he
had been inviting Robert, hoping to meet
there with some more ready victim of his
temptations and skill: for James had so
thoroughly learned the art of cheating, and
had so little regard for truth, that seldom
did a copper make its appearance upon

"pitching ground," where he was present, which he did not manage in some way to pass into his pocket; while few indeed of them ever escaped thence to appease the anger of those, who, vexed at the "luck" which "wicked Jim" kept in his own control, not only sacrificed their money and disobeyed the right, but received from him their first lessons in swearing.

But Robert had given to conscience, that friendly voice from God, a strong place in his heart, and therefore could not be easily betrayed into evil; for those who fear the Lord, are kept from falling into sin by his power. Again, as he proceeded homeward, his thoughts returned to the pleasing subject from which they had for a time been diverted by pity for the vicious boy. And when he came to a grocer's store, brightly lighted, he bounded in, and, laying upon the counter two of his sixpences, demanded their equivalent in *good tea*. As he received the small parcel from the tradesman's hands, a smile of delight overspread his features, and the involuntary words, "My dear good mo-

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ther!" dropped touchingly from his lips. It was worth a week of toil indeed! Cheerfully then laying down the remaining sixpence, he purchased with it a few potatoes and three or four candles.

With a proud heart and light step he sprang up the stairs leading to the low room in which they lived; then, setting by the potatoes and candles, he went softly up to his mother, and, placing in her hand the new luxury, turned quickly to the window to conceal the tears which were starting to his eye.

"Robert! my good Robert! God spare you to us!" ejaculated the poor woman; and laying her hand upon his head, with fervent kiss, and fervent faith, she silently asked for him the richest blessings which heaven might condescend to give.

CHAPTER IV.

TRUE KINDNESS.

HUMBLE and courteous in his manner toward all, Robert was rapidly gaining friends. Among the few who began to appreciate his unassuming worth, were some who were able to assist him in his efforts for a livelihood, by furnishing him occasional employment. But not from such individuals alone did he seem desirous of securing favor; the poor, and feeble, and aged, shared in the attentions which he could bestow, and among them, where least observed by others, were some of the brightest manifestations of his kindness. One, who was almost blind, he was in the habit of guarding to and from meeting, when other infirmities did not prevent her from attending. With another, who was old, and much affected by a cancer in the head, he was accustomed frequently to sit in his leisure moments, sometimes reading to her from the word of God; and when one day a little boy,

in his manner rapidly gaining who began to g worth, were assist him in his furnishing him But not from he seem desir- poor, and fee- the attentions d among them, hers, were some ons of his kind- most blind, he ng to and from mities did not

With another, fected by a can- accustomed fre- sure moments, from the word day a little boy,

who had been sent to her with some honey for her cough, exclaimed disdainfully to Robert, because of the long visit he had been making in her room, "Poh! I was glad enough to get away as soon as I could, her head smells so bad, and looks so disagreeably with those thick bandages," Robert only answered by saying that *he* could bear it very well, though it did seem bad, because he thought to himself, "What if she were *my mother*, and living alone so? I should want some one to be willing to sit by her then!"

For many, indeed, Robert was never unwilling to perform any service, and was frequently offering his aid; so that in the small circle with which he was connected, his very name was beloved, and his coming everywhere welcomed.

Some, who are not thoughtfully desirous of improving every opportunity to add to the happiness of mankind, may think these were but small matters, and regarding them as of little consequence, will be very likely to lose the pleasure of contributing their aid toward increasing the general stock of

good, forgetting how much they really *might* do, and leaving to those only who can perform great deeds, which may attract the notice of hundreds, the delight of relieving, in some degree, the sorrows of the world. Such persons, would they reflect a moment, will be surprised to find how much the comfort of their lives has depended upon little kindnesses and momentary attentions, and how small a share of it has been caused by any *great* efforts of others in their behalf.

The earth in its lovely drapery of green, the trees which compose our vast forests—even that one which may stand loftiest, and highest wave its luxuriant branches—owe not their beauty and their grandeur more to the copious shower and favoring noontide sun, than to the softened morning beams and gently nursing dews of eve. Then let the youngest heart which may have learned to estimate a comfort, begin to cherish there that true benevolence which will lead it to seek, in small events, to bless the world. Afterward, “because they have been faithful in little,” the com-

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desire may be given them.

Good little Andrew did not laugh at
Robert, when one night, meeting him in
the street with his arms full of shavings, he
asked, "Where are you going, Robert?"
"To make a clean bed for old Mrs. Mo-
rey's pig," said Robert.

"You are always kind to every one,
Robert; and so I suppose every one thinks
you have nothing else to do."

"No," said Robert, "she did not ask me
to do this for him; but you know she has
no little boys to wait upon her, and I
thought poor piggy must be cold there
alone, in his wet, dirty nest: so as I was
coming by Mr. Williams' work-shop, I
begged these shavings for him. I believe
I shall sleep the better to-night myself, to
know that I have made even a poor little
pig more comfortable than he would have
been but for me."

Meantime William was emulating his
elder brother in goodness, and, so far as his
younger age and tender frame would per-
mit, was very ambitious to follow his ex-

ample, and perform labors of usefulness. Sometimes he was intrusted with the charge of an errand, when Robert was otherwise engaged; and the speed and accuracy with which he succeeded in performing it, often gained him the surprise and reward of the individual who had employed him.

Then, too, he had been able by manly effort to keep their hearth-stone warm during the cold winter days, thus far, by his diligence in bringing home the chips which the laborers in the ship yards allowed him to gather up from around them; and when these failed he would go to the distant forests, often in storms and snows, and bind up the knots and dry branches which the fierce winds had broken from the trees and strewed upon the ground; and daily did he divide these necessary but humble supplies with the poor widow, Mrs. Meloy, living in the next room, who, aged and almost blind, had neither son nor daughter to cheer her loneliness, nor penny of her own in store to relieve her wants; but, dependent upon

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the very scanty provisions afforded as her share from the parish, was almost unknown to charity, and was waiting only for the change which would remove her from her infirmities and poverty to the weary pilgrim's home—the grave.

The little boys were both happy in doing all in their power for her comfort; nor were their sincere endeavors unavailing. Robert was always ready, when at home, to serve her in some way; and William, in addition to the chips, shavings, and branches, with which he contributed with some success to warm her trembling limbs, was not less useful to her.

At the foot of a high, rugged hill, a short distance from them, a small spring of water issued from the bank, and, falling over the projecting point of a ledge of rocks, supplied many poor emigrants with almost the only article of use to be obtained without money or price. From this little fountain William brought water for their daily use, until now, in the severity of the cold, the small stream was so choked by the ice that it was long ere a bucket could be

filled from it, and the stones and surrounding embankment were so covered by its thick incrustations, that, as his shoes were worn out, he could no longer stand and wait as formerly for the slowly dripping liquid; this attention to his mother and Mrs. Meloy had therefore passed into the care of the more hardy Robert.

One evening, hastening home from his employment, and quickly performing the customary little services for each, he stood leaning against the low window, looking down upon the many houses about them. He was planning for future years; his thoughts roved wildly, and hope promised fairly, as he summed up a long list of time, and labor, and knowledge, and pleasures which he was fancying would be his portion. He would be willing, he thought, to labor hard to deny himself; and he would do so: then, having acquired the knowledge and resources which he imagined would satisfy his wishes, he went on to paint in his mind the snug home he would like to have for his mother's comfort; he seemed to see her occupying the principal

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THE WIDOW'S JEWELS.

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seat within it—a little older it is true than now, but softly touched by the hand of age, so that she could still retain her health and capacity to enjoy the pleasures he would delight to pour at her feet after her long series of hardships and toils. O, this was the brightest part of the picture, and long did he dwell upon it, changing and improving his fancied arrangements, as he thought would best please her, with all the interest of reality. Then his little sister

Nelly should know no want of aught he could procure to gratify her; William should be sent to school, and be supplied with means to support himself; and all their now poor and anxious circle should be happy—when he should be a man! O, how should he then gladden the hearts of the poor whom he knew, and how generously would he remember to reward any little destitute boy whom he might send on errands for him, when he himself would be the gentleman.

So busy was he with his boyish schemes as to forget his fatigue and the darkness of the hour—all in the bright days of coming years. Suddenly a town clock reminded him that the time was approaching in which old Mrs. Meloy was to go out to her evening meeting; he left the fair dreams of future prosperity and usefulness which he was picturing, and presented himself as usual at her door to accompany her, still exhilarated by the effect of his imagination.

The old lady, sitting on a low stool by the fire, was just putting on a clean cap. As Robert opened the door, his little sister

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Nelly sprang from her posture by the shoulder of the poor woman, upon which she had been leaning during the story she had been listening to from her lips, and clapping her hands with joy, as a pleasant thought seemed at once to suggest itself to her mind, she said, "O Robert, Robert, come in; I want to tell you something. O, I wish it were not so dark now, then you could see; but only think, grandma Meloy's hair is turning black! I wish you could see it; there's one black hair, and then another, and another, and close by it two or three together, all turned as black! Sha'nt you be glad when they are all alike? Then I guess she will be young again, and stand straighter and walk faster than she does now; and I suppose she will see again: she will not wish, Robert, to have you come to go to meeting with her then."

"No, no," said the poor woman, shaking her head, "I shall never be young again. Once, many, many long years ago, my hair was dark and smooth, like your own bright locks; my eyes were as blue and

quick to see; my cheek as soft and round; and I could stand as straight and run as fast as your little self, Nelly. But O those years have gone: they came and went so swiftly that I scarce could tell how they passed. But by and by, here and there a white hair came, and wrinkle followed wrinkle on my cheek, and from my eye the clear blue faded, my sight grew dim, my ear grew dull of hearing, my steps were slow and slower still, till my feet trembled as I put them to the ground, and my shoulders bowed down beneath the weight of almost eighty years.

"Now lay your hand just here, Nelly, upon your heart: you feel it beating full and fast—that is your life. You cannot make it still, nor could you wake it into motion if it once should cease to throb. It was God who gave it first that motion, and it is he who keeps it active still. Perhaps for eighty years to come he will watch around it every little moment, that it may not cease; or he *may* bid it *soon* to beat no more. But should he condescend to guard you thus so many years, then you will be

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as I am now, and need some happy little child for your lonely hours, or some kind hand like Robert's to lead you to the place of prayer."

"O grandma!" she exclaimed; "and then shall we live on, and be always so old, and lonesome, and sick?"

"Not always, Nelly. Feel here, my heart beats slower and more feebly than yours and Robert's. It will not beat much longer, for its strength is almost gone, and, before many months are passed, probably it can move no more; then, when it has moved for the last time, this breath will cease, these dull eyes will close, this face, these limbs, will stiffen, and be laid away in the grave, to molder, and blacken, and crumble into dust. But still, Nelly, I shall live; God will then have called my spirit to himself: there, in that other world, I shall not need this heart to beat, or these limbs to move—like the angels I shall live.

"But there will be a day of glory and of terror, such as has never been—for God will come. Man shall look upward to the

opening skies, and behold him there in awful brightness, surrounded by a thousand times ten thousand of his angels. The sun and stars shall fade away before him; the mountains and the seas shall tremble at his presence; and when he shall utter his voice, it shall shake terribly the earth, and all the dead shall hear it. Then, rising from their long slumbers, these bodies, once decayed and mingling undistinguished with the dust, shall put on life immortal at his command. None can disobey him then, or flee the glances of his eye, or tarry in the grave. *You* will be there, *I* shall be there, to occupy again these bodies; not blackened and moldering, as when the worms fed upon them in their dark abode; not old, and weary, and sick, as when the spirit left them; but, sown in corruption, they shall be raised in incorruption, never to grow sick, and weary, and old, again: but if buried in faith, new rising, they shall meet the Saviour's smile, and in the twinkling of an eye be changed; beautiful and happy for ever shall they be, like his own most glorious body.

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"Because of sin once, God condemned all mankind to die in punishment; but because Christ redeemed us by his death, the bodies of those who forsake sin, believing in him, shall be restored to life everlasting. That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign, through righteousness, unto eternal life."

Robert turned away with a sigh and a smile. With a sigh--for the solemn thoughts upon that certain and awful future, had dissipated the frail vision of the brief and uncertain future which he had been so busy in portraying to himself; but a smile may well follow such a sigh, when the heart can feel itself secure in pardoned sin from the fear and destruction which is to overtake those who have not "fled for refuge" to the blood of Christ.

CHAPTER V.

ROBERT'S DEATH.

ANOTHER Friday night came around, and scarce a week had passed away, since, exhilarated with joy and health, Robert had almost flown up the stairs to meet the blessing and prayer of his pious mother. That prayer was soon to be answered by Him who knows "what best for each will prove," and who will surely recompense the blessing of the parent upon the head of the child.

It was late in the afternoon as he turned his steps homeward from his labor. The dark purple clouds lay threateningly and low along the horizon, and the wintery-night winds swept coldly through the streets and lanes of the city. As the darkness increased, the chill blasts became more and more penetrating; and, as they hurried one after the other, bore along upon their course clouds of the light snow which had fallen during the day.

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facing the rough wind, felt its force, and shiveringly gathered his thick clothes more closely about him.

Trembling more than he was wont to do before the cold, and with no extra garment to protect him, Robert could only grasp his little jacket tightly to him with one hand, while, quickening his pace, he pressed the other to his aching head. Flushed and fatigued, it was with difficulty he could ascend the long flights of stairs leading to their abode; and when he had performed the tasks which devolved upon him at night, for his mother and Mrs. Meloy, he sunk down upon his little couch, feverish and restless, begging his mother to pray that the pain in his head might abate. All night scarcely could he refrain from disturbing the family with his groans; and when the morning light appeared, his waking eye hailed its coming, but it brought no relief to that deep-seated pain. Unable to rise during all the day, the long hours, as they passed, seemed but to add to it in their wearisome flight. Toward evening, his anxious mother, alarmed

much by his increased sufferings, and fearing the result, though not expecting immediate danger to his life, sent away little William for a physician. But it was too late. A fatal disease was upon the brain, so speedy in its distressing effects, that medicine could not check its power. God was calling him home; and, with a heart almost breaking, his mother bowed above him, and watched the symptoms of approaching death.

He only who formed that heart—who had once before visited it in “disguised love,” leaving it widowed and bereft—could now measure its deep sorrow, as the dreadful blow was about to fall upon it, again to remove the earthly hope on which she leaned. But He who layeth waste can best restore. While he marks the degree of affliction needed, and measures the sorrow of his suffering ones, his own unerring skill knows how to mete out consoling grace for the bitter moment of trial here, and also, how rich treasures to reserve for the mourning, in the bright world where the cause of every grief shall be known,

and every sigh and tear receive its just recompense of reward.

"So comforted, and so sustained," Mrs. McCoy watched him as the short breath grew shorter still; and catching the last smile from his lips, as his spirit was departing, closed his eyes just as the light of the holy sabbath morn was beaming upon the earth.

CHAPTER VI.

ROBERT'S BURIAL.

ONE of the mildest days which winter had brought during all its reign, was the Monday which followed this sabbath. The very winds seemed hushed and soft as spring time, as if unwilling to add to the widow's gloom by one mournful note. The sun looked into the low window of their little room, with warm and cheerful light. It was shining for the last time upon the still form there which was so recently rejoicing in its brightness.

It was the burial day of little Robert

But, calm as was the air, and bright the sunlight, they could not cheer into one moment's forgetfulness, the hearts of those sincere mourners for the dead.

Desolate, indeed, is the dwelling of the wealthy, where sorrow and death are visiting; and a loneliness is there, which not the presence and sympathy of many friends, nor all the pomp of riches, can relieve. But when in the mode of deep poverty the shadow of death falls, *there* is gloom which naught but the light of God's smile can penetrate; when from thence the promising hope and future support are removed, *there* is a weight of sorrow which presses the spirits down.

When the hour appointed for the ceremony arrived, a few individuals, some of them strangers to the afflicted mother, but who had known young Robert, and appreciated his worth, assembled in the small attic room once his home, the ceiling of which was so low that they could scarcely stand erect. The decent black coffin in which he was now laid, attired for the grave, stood all uncovered upon two chairs in the centre

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of the floor. The mother in silent grief sat by the head of the departed boy, with one arm encircling the pillow on which it rested, as if in sleep; and gazing steadily upon the dear remains with fondness which could scarce relinquish them in these last short moments of possession. Little William, with calm brow, stood by her side, looking within the coffin. The elder sister, Jane, had come in from her place of service, and sat near them, weeping aloud. Little Nelly, Robert's pet, though very young, appeared as true a mourner; and seated upon a block close to the head of the coffin, with eyes red and swollen by tears, often sobbed and murmured something about *her* Robert.

Old Mrs. Meloy was there; and a few other tenants of the house had come in to share the sorrowful exercises. As the kind-hearted minister glanced upon the group before him, his heart melted with sympathy; the deep feelings of his breast were traceable by the flint upon his temples, and the moisture in his eyes; and, looking upon the young boy whom he had once

so highly esteemed, he interrupted the silence of the apartment by touchingly uttering the words,

"He rests in Jesus, and is bless'd,
How sweet his slumbers are!"

The tears of all followed; and the room was again silent, until, standing by the foot of the open coffin, he commenced the services of the occasion with reading an appropriate hymn. Faintly the song ascended from that sad company, and readily did they bow in prayer, even those most unaccustomed to kneel as the minister in solemn, heartfelt expressions, presented their petitions to the throne of divine mercy.

When the prayer was concluded, the gloomy moment came to seal up in its long sleep the lifeless body. O the unutterable bitterness of that moment to the stricken heart! As two men approached with the coffin lid and screws to perform that duty, they again stood back while the mother, throwing her arm over the cold bosom of her son, wrapped him once more in the last embrace of yearning love; and

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laying her face by the side of that head she had so often cherished upon her own breast, sobbingly bathed the still hair with tears. William wept aloud; and each of that little family, taking their last kiss, yielded themselves up to tears afresh.

Violent had been the mother's struggle with grief; but it passed—calmly she saw them securing the lid which for ever hid him from her sight; and as they bore him through the narrow passage to the stairs, her eyes followed them, and pressing her hands together upon her knee, while her lips grew very pale, she slightly moved her person backward and forward, and, still gazing through the now vacant doorway, her heart uttered its agony in low, simple ejaculations—"Gone!—Robert—my Robert! my *good* son Robert!"

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A few months only have gone by since that worthily beloved boy has slept the sleep of death. Grief and poverty are still pressing upon the little family who remain; but, in daily intercourse with God, they find that his love and care, for which they cove-

nanted in giving their hearts to him, are now their strong hope :

"Earth has no sorrow that heaven cannot heal."

In prayer and faith they know, as all shall know who seek, that God, even the mighty God, spreads his tabernacle of mercy above their heads ; and, asking refuge there, they are able to rejoice, though sorrowful ; to trust unfearely that his providence will supply them, when unable to tell where they shall get their daily bread. Doubts will not live within their hearts, for they know that God does not forget nor forsake those who put their trust in him ; and they lean upon that gracious One who has assured his trembling children, that when every earthly comfort is apparently failing, he will not fail them. It is his word ; and though "the grass withereth—the flower fadeth—the word of our God shall stand for ever."

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CHAPTER VII.

THE DEAD ALIVE.

At the close of one of the coldest days in the winter of 1835, an old lady called at our house to pass the night. She had come that day from B—, in the southern part of this state; was cold, fatigued, and hungry, having tasted no food since she left her own desolate home.

Upon entering the room, I was attracted by her appearance. Sixty-five years could scarcely have told the length of her life's pilgrimage, yet she seemed afflicted with few of the infirmities usually attendant upon such age. Her dress, somewhat fanciful, was of Scotch plaid, and the large bright cheeks of scarlet, green, and black, made rather an unbecoming contrast with the deep traces that time had graven on her face; her little starched cap, in full trim, set up daintily; and the high-heeled shoes which she had slipped from her feet, were lying, toe to toe, at prudent distance from the fire: all seemed the care-

fully preserved relics of former taste and years.

As she drew up her small figure more erectly in the chair, and glanced her black eyes familiarly around the apartment, I thought I had never seen the face of years so bright with animation; as if she had either never known the many disappointments allotted for the threescore years and ten, or that such trials had been happily forgotten: her whole countenance, indeed, indicated that she had just set out in life with new hopes—new joys.

After she had taken supper, I drew my seat toward her, and she soon revealed to me the following simple story. I will endeavor to "tell the tale as 'twas told to me."

* * * * *

"In the northern part of the state of Maine, in the small town of —, I lived many years with my husband. We had no family, and hard work enough it was upon a poor farm which scarcely paid for tilling, to get an honest livelihood.

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almost always unfortunate. I would not be ungrateful; but Providence did not smile upon him, so we *almost* thought, as upon those who needed his smiles much less. Yet I can now look back and see it was all for the best. I was not a Christian then, though my husband was. His health was very poor; and with an aching heart I have often watched him from the window of our home, raking the scanty hay, or hoeing the sandy loam. I have seen him lean upon some tree, to wipe the sweat from his pale forehead, and his wearied arms would fall heavily beside his trembling body. And sometimes as he came in he would say, 'If it were not for you, Nelly, and the baby which Heaven has given us, how glad I should be to go to my rest; or, if it might please him, to call us all to-*gether*!'

"But such was *not* his will. Ere our baby had passed its first year, my husband did *go to his rest*. He left me peaceful in God, yet 'sorrowing,' as he said, 'for the lonely walk which might be mine' (and O, *how lonely* it has been!) 'before we

should sit down together in our Father's kingdom.'

"Six years I struggled on with my little boy, desiring nothing for myself, but much for him; and a brighter lad than John you never saw. But my health failed at last; and, unable longer to maintain us both, I concluded to put him out to work as well as he could, (and he was quite *handy*.) to some farmer.

"For some time I heard of no one who would take so young a boy. At length Mr. 'Lijah Baker, a miller, happened to be in the place on business, who lived about fifteen miles from there; hearing of me, he called where I was, and agreed to take Johnny home with him. As he had never been to school, Mr. Baker promised to send him three months of the year, till he was ten years old, on condition that till then I would furnish him with a new hat and a pair of shoes once a year.

"I could have but little information of the man's character, yet, as it was the only way before me, I consented to let him go.

"Bitter was the hour of our parting.

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He had always been a good boy, and was all the world to me—my daily companion, my only, affectionate little son. Now in his clean clothes, his light glossy hair parted and brushed one side—though his round blue eyes filled with tears, yet he never looked so well, or seemed so dear to me before. He clasped his little arms tight around my neck; really, I was more a child than him, for I sobbed and wept. I could hear his little heart beat quickly, as he tried to comfort me. 'Mother, don't cry so,' said he; 'I will be good. I shall soon be old enough to earn some money, and you shall have it *all*. I will buy you some *glasses*, and then you can sew in the evening. And I will get you a *pound* of tea. Eben Wood loved me; he will hold the thread for you to wind, and pick up chips for you now, sometimes, I guess.'

"But the moment came for him to leave. I looked upon them as the wagon rolled out of the yard and jolted slowly up the hill, and watched them till the top of his little blue cap disappeared, as they de-

ascended the other side of the hill; and then I entered the house and wept anew.

"I could not afford to ride; so when the year came round, I walked to Mr. Baker's to see my boy, taking the shoes and hat. My spirits were never lighter, or my steps more nimble, than while on my way; they were less so coming home, perhaps, but I could have gone any distance to meet him—my heart was very tender for him. I found him well, and a good boy still.

"The second year I went, and he was much improved. His kind feelings made him a little gentleman to everybody and everything. He would not give a moment's pain to bird or chicken, bug or fly. And everybody loved John.

"The third year I went. He was ten years old that day; it was the nineteenth of June. It was dark when I came to the house. No person or creature was in the yard; no light gleamed from the windows. I knocked, then opened the door: all was dark and empty; there was no sound, but the crickets chirping in the hearth, and the wind rustling in an apple-tree behind the

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house. Turning away, I came and stood by the stream; the water still poured over the dam, but the wheels of the mill were motionless. Sitting down upon a log, I wept.

"It was a mile to any neighbor's house. Overcome with fatigue, I could scarcely rise; yet the thought that he might be there encouraged me, and I walked on.

"The people seemed kind, pitied my sorrow, but knew nothing of my son. They said Mr. Baker had failed, and left the town suddenly—no one knew where he was gone. I went from place to place, and wore out three pair of new shoes in search of him. Once I traced him to Newport, and learned that a man had there put such a boy on board a vessel to go to France; but could ascertain nothing more, and returned home broken-hearted.

"Two years passed away. Unable to support myself—without money and without friends—but one thing remained for me. I went to B——, and cast myself upon the provision of the state, and became an honest, industrious inmate, of the alms-house.

"Year after year came and went, without bringing me any tidings of my son. I learned to live without him, and only thought of him as a spirit in heaven.

"I became tired of my companions in the *poor-house*, and hired of Mr. Ford, our overseer, a little room over his corn-house. As it was of no use to him, he let me have it for sixpence a week. The state allowed me but little more than this for my support; however, I managed to get along. I could knit stockings for my neighbors, and used to gather herbs for the sick. Besides, I did not need much: tea, sugar, coffee, butter, and such like, I gave up long ago. Two meals a day were all I allowed myself.

"Cold weather was rather hard upon me, sometimes, it is true; when the sleet covered my window, and the loud winds shook the building around me. At such times, when I was most lonely, the image of my little John was ever present with me, till it almost seemed as if he were *really* there, sitting upon his low stool close by my side, rubbing his thin hands (softly,

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that I might not hear him) to keep them warm, and instructing me into the plans he had formed for taking care of me when I should be old. But these thoughts would soon vanish and give place to happiness more abiding. The widow's Friend forgot me not. His smile kindled gladness in my room, till even the rough, knotted boards, of my apartment seemed to join in praise with my heart.

"But though I could talk without ceasing of his mercies to me, (for such words are 'honey to my taste,') yet I will not detain you. I will tell of them in 'the general assembly and church of the first-born in heaven.'

"Seventeen years had passed away. It was just a week to-night, two gentlemen came to Mr. Ford's about eleven o'clock at night—they were well dressed, fine looking men, as you will see—with a handsome horse and chaise. They asked if Mrs. Leonard was there. Mr. Ford pointed them to where I was, said I was probably asleep, and invited them to stay till morning with him; but one of them replied

he must see me then—that he was *my son*!

“ Mr. Ford came over with them. They knocked at my door; I awoke, wondering, and let them in. Wishing to see if I would recognize a son in a stranger, they merely bowed as they passed me, requesting permission to look at the room, talked as if they proposed buying it, occasionally glancing toward me, as I was sitting wrapped in my old cloak, shivering, upon the side of the bed. I thought they had taken a strange time to purchase a building—almost midnight! I had heard of *speculators*, and of their being *about crazy* with business, and concluded these were some of them.

“ One came toward me, and asked me if I lived there all alone; and if I were not very lonesome. I replied, I had been so at first, but was now accustomed to it. He then asked me if I had no family. I replied, ‘*None.*’ ‘Have you *never* had any?’ he asked. This was always a *hard question* for me. I paused a moment to control myself, and could only say, ‘The Lord

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gave, and the Lord hath taken *them* away.' No one spoke. I looked up—suddenly the bargain had been forgotten—tears were in the eyes of each. One of them turned away and leaned over the fire-place, while the other, (who had not before spoken to me,) throwing his arms around my neck, said, 'Mother! mother! *I am your little Johnny!*' "

The old lady wept, and said to me, "I tell you what, I felt *pretty sinky*."

The son, since he was ten years old, had been almost constantly at sea; what little time was allowed him in any New-England port, he had employed searching for his mother, but knew not where to find her till now. He had then given up the chances of a life upon the deep, and established himself in business in S**** *.

"And now," said the old lady, "I am going, and expect to spend my days with John. I think I am not unthankful for this great blessing, nor have forgotten God, whose love and providence protected my boy in a world full of danger, and has made my 'heart sing for joy' because 'my

son was dead, and is alive again ; was lost, and is found.'

" If ever you should go to S**** ****, you may see where he lives. His name is John Newton Leonard: on his sign it is John N. Leonard, but his name is John *Newton* Leonard."

THE END.

WELS.

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